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# CHARTER OF INCORPORATION:

*Granted May 4, 1780, by an Act of the Legislature of Massachusetts, entitled : An Act to incorporate and establish a Society for the cultivation and promotion of Arts and Sciences.*

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As the Arts and Sciences are the foundation and support of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce ; as they are necessary to the wealth, peace, independence, and happiness of a people ; as they essentially promote the honor and dignity of the government which patronizes them ; and as they are most effectually cultivated and diffused through a State by the forming and incorporating of men of genius and learning into public societies : For these beneficent purposes,

Be it therefore enacted by the Council and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same : That <sup>1</sup>

be, and they are hereby formed into, constituted, and made a Body Politic and Corporate, by the name of THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES ; and that they and their successors, and such other persons as shall be elected in the manner hereafter mentioned, shall be and continue a Body Politic and Corporate, by the same name forever.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid :* That the Fellows of the said Academy may from time to time elect a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, one or more Secretaries, and such other officers of the said Academy as they shall judge necessary or convenient ; and they shall have full power and authority from time to time to determine and establish the names, number, and duties of their several officers, and the tenure or estate they shall respectively have in their offices ; and also to authorize and empower their President, or some other Fellow of the Academy, at their pleasure, to administer such oaths to such officers as they shall appoint and determine, for the well-ordering and good government of the said Academy : provided the same be not repugnant to the laws of the State.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid :* That the Fellows of the said Academy shall have one Common Seal, which they may make use of in whatsoever cause or business shall concern the Academy, or be relative to the end and design of its institution ; and shall have power and authority from time to time to break, change, and renew the Common Seal, at their pleasure ; and

<sup>1</sup> For the names of the Fellows incorporated, see pp. 33, 34.

that they may sue and be sued in all actions, real, personal, and mixed, and prosecute and defend the same unto final judgment and execution, by the name of the President and Fellows of the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid:* That the Fellows of the said Academy may from time to time elect such persons to be Fellows thereof as they shall judge proper; and that they shall have full power and authority from time to time to suspend, expel, or disfranchise any Fellow of the said Academy who shall by his conduct render himself unworthy of a place in that body, in the judgment of the Academy; and also to settle and establish the rules, forms, and conditions of election, suspension, expulsion, and disfranchisement. *Provided,* That the number of the said Academy who are inhabitants of this State shall not, at any one time, be more than two hundred, nor less than forty.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid:* That the Fellows of the said Academy shall have full power and authority from time to time to make and enact such reasonable rules, orders, and by-laws, not repugnant to the laws of this State, as shall be necessary or convenient for the well-ordering and good government of the said Academy; and to annex reasonable pecuniary fines and penalties to the breach of them, not exceeding the sum of *twenty pounds*, to be sued for and recovered in any court of record within this State, in the name and for the use of the President and Fellows of the said Academy; and the same rules, orders, and by-laws to repeal at their pleasure; and also to settle and establish the times, places, and manner of convening the Fellows of the said Academy; and also to determine the number of Fellows which shall be present to constitute a meeting of the said Academy. *Provided,* That the Fellows of the said Academy shall meet twice in a year at the least; and that the place of their meeting shall never be more than thirty miles distant from the town of *Boston*.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid:* That the Fellows of the said Academy may, and shall forever hereafter be deemed capable in the law of having, holding, and taking in fee-simple or any less estate, by gift, grant, devise, or otherwise, any lands, tenements, or other estate, real and personal. *Provided,* That the annual income of the said real estate shall not exceed the sum of *five hundred pounds*, and the annual income or interest of the said personal estate shall not exceed the sum of *two thousand pounds*. All the sums aforementioned in this act to be valued in silver, at the rate of *six shillings and sixpence* by the ounce. And the annual interest and income of the said real and personal estate, together with the fines and penalties aforesaid, shall be appropriated for premiums to encourage improvements and discoveries in agriculture, arts, and manufactures, or for other purposes consistent with the end and design of the institution of the said Academy, as the Fellows thereof shall determine.

*And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid:* That the end and design of the institution of the said Academy is, to promote and encourage the knowledge of the antiquities of *America*, and of the natural history of the country, and to determine the uses to which the various natural productions of the country may be applied; to promote and encourage medical discoveries, mathematical disquisitions, philosophical inquiries and experiments; astronomical, meteorological, and geographical

observations, and improvements in agriculture, arts, manufactures, and commerce; and, in fine, to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.

*And it is further enacted:* That the place where the first meeting of the Fellows of the said Academy shall be held, shall be the Philosophy Chamber in the University of *Cambridge*; and that the Honorable *James Bowdoin*, Esq. be, and he hereby is authorized and empowered to fix the time for holding the said meeting, and to notify the same to the Fellows of the Academy.